

## **Memorandum**

**From:** Noel Ludwig, R2 Mountain Resorts Team Hydrologist  
**To:** Kara Chadwick, San Juan National Forest Supervisor  
**Subject:** Snowy Range Improvements EA: Air Quality, Climate Change, and Wilderness  
**Date:** June 9, 2020

The primary impacts potentially affecting air quality, climate change, and wilderness areas that would result from the Snowy Range Ski Area (SRSA) Upgrades and Maintenance Project are related to construction and operation of proposed infrastructure. Air quality, climate change, and wilderness area impacts related to the project are expected to be negligible, so these resources have been dismissed from detailed analysis in the Environmental Assessment (EA). Additional detail is provided below.

### **Impacts from construction**

Air quality may be degraded temporarily from vehicle emissions during the construction of the project. These impacts are anticipated to be small, localized, and short-term. Construction equipment, including trucks and staff vehicles, would be the primary sources of these emissions. Construction may last one to two summers.

The only Class I airsheds or wilderness areas within 30 miles of the project area are the Savage Run Wilderness and Platte River Wilderness areas, located approximately 10.5 miles and 15.8 miles southwest of SRSA, respectively. Because the prevailing wind direction across the Medicine Bow National Forest is predominantly from the west, it is unlikely that any emissions generated directly or indirectly by SRSA's operations currently affect these wilderness areas. The emissions from construction activities would be limited to a couple of seasons and small enough that they would be very unlikely to result in any reduction to the air quality of these or other wilderness areas within 50 miles, all of which are south or west of the project area. Overall, emissions associated with the construction phase of the project would be negligible and difficult to measure.

Similarly, emission of greenhouse gases by construction equipment would be very minor and not measurable against the backdrop of overall greenhouse gas emissions across southern Wyoming.

### **Impacts from operation**

In the long run, emissions associated with the operation of proposed infrastructure would be very small. The primary source of these operational emissions would be expanded operation of the existing snowmaking pump (capable of pumping 400 gallons per minute). Occasional vehicle use, for example during the summer for maintenance activities, would also contribute minor incremental emissions. Again, these would have no measurable impact on any of the wilderness areas within 50 miles of SRSA.

**Impacts associated with estimated visitation growth**

The proposed action is not anticipated to measurably increase visitation at SRSA. While this increase would result in slightly more transit to/from the ski area, this growth would not be sufficient to cause a measurable reduction in air quality or an acceleration of climate change across southeastern Wyoming. Impacts from visitation growth on wilderness areas would be essentially nonexistent, since wilderness areas are rarely accessed in winter and the closest wilderness area is more than 10 miles from the project area.